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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002685

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/04/2019
TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)
SUBJECT: LATEST ELECTIONS RESULTS AND THE COMPLAINTS
TIMELINE

Classified By: Polcouns Annie Pforzheimer, Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (SBU) With 60.3% percent of polling station results announced as of September 2, Karzai has 1,744,428 votes (47.3 percent) with Abdullah at 1,201,838 votes (32.6 percent). The 3,689,715 valid votes counted so far suggest a nationwide vote count of approximately 6 million votes. This total is lower than the 7.1 million who voted for president in 2004 and the 5.8 million who voted in parliamentary elections in 2005. Since there is no voter registration list, we cannot measure voter turnout percentages in traditional ways. The next tranche of results is scheduled to be announced at 1700 Kabul time on September 5; we anticipate the IEC will announce the cumulative results of 75 percent of polling centers.

Irregularities and Complaints

¶2. (SBU) The IEC is conducting internal audits and investigations of polling centers where fraud is suspected, and based on these, the IEC is decides which ballots to include in the national tally. Because there was less observer presence and more security problems in southern provinces, the IEC has scrutinized these provinces more carefully and released a smaller percentage of their results. The IEC may -- on its own -- exclude ballots from the count.

¶3. (C) The IEC has reportedly quarantined some 300 Tamper-Evident Bags (TEBs) during the counting process, 250 of which are expected to be very problematic. (Note: This information is not official, because the IEC processes are opaque on this issue; Embassy Election Team members present as observers at the Tally Center have compiled this informal count. End Note.) Each TEB represents a polling center with four to seven polling stations. If nullified, post estimates these 250 TEBs could represent 250,000 to 375,000 votes depending on turnout levels (or about 4 to 6 percent of 6 million votes), based on a range of 200-300 voters per polling site. UNDP-ELECT and other sources have viable concerns that IEC leadership is, under political pressure, considering suspending investigation into some problematic TEBs and entering them into the tally stream.

¶4. (SBU) The ECC has received 2,187 complaints. 39.4 percent involved polling irregularities (i.e. "ghost" voters), 29.6 percent concern intimidation/campaigning, and 11.4 percent involve access to polling stations. Of the total, 652 are Category A8 that if determined to be valid could materially affect the vote count. Category A complaints are being given priority for investigation and adjudication. The ECC has 200 staff across the country conducting investigations including in Ghazni, Kandahar, Paktika, Kabul, Baghlan, and Konduz. The ECC has broad authority to exclude ballots from the tally, order a recount, or even a order a re-polling. The IEC and ECC are working closely together.

Complaints Timeline

15. (SBU) The period for filing complaints with the ECC about voting day fraud has ended. The ECC will only continue to accept complaints about the tally process.

Timeline Estimates (All subject to change)

Sept. 7-10 -- Preliminary nationwide results released.

Sept. 21-23 - Investigation and complaints period ends. ECC is unwilling to estimate time required until it makes more progress assessing the current batch of complaints. The ECC said they would have a better estimate next week.

IEC certification of the results would take place after the complaints period ends.

Mid-October - run-off, if necessary. Election law requires it be held within two weeks of certification. The IEC says it is prepared logistically for second round. UNDP affirmed the same to us this week, noting it has the appropriate contracts in place for procurement of supplies. The security forces need approximately two weeks notice to prepare for a second round. Some remaining questions include the issue of whether to open a center that experienced major irregularities in a first round, and whether IEC will vet employees based on allegations of fraud.

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